# Collected Poems
## Stephen Gwynn

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# COLLECTED POEMS

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BY

STEPHEN GWYNN

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*To you, my darling love and child,*
*These gatherings from a life,*
*Flotsam of years when blood was wild,*
*Jetsam of joy, love, strife,*

*You knew not; yet in what appears*
*You, if none else, will see*
*What I have made of all these years,*
*What they have made of me.*

*Little: yet much, if, oh, my dear,*
*From all I tried to do,*
*And failed in, comes a comrade here*
*Worth something still to you.*

# NOTE

RATHER more than half of the poems here collected appeared either in *The Queen's Chronicler* or *The Lay of Ossian and Patrick,* two little volumes now unprocurable. Of the new ones, "Corranbinnie" was first printed in *Blackwood's Magazine* (where also *The Lay of Ossian and Patrick* and *Known and Unknown* made their first appearance); "A Friend's Garden" in the *Spectator;* and "The Swimmer" and "A Song of Victory" in the *Observer.* I make due acknowledgment to the editors.

The "Woman of Beare" is adapted from Kuno Meyer's literal version of an old Irish poem, which he contributed to *Otia Merseiana* in a paper called "Stories and Songs from Irish MSS."

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## THE ASH WALK

A POINTED arch in the grey wall
Leads where the slanting sunbeams fall
On the white path of river sand,
And, ranged in rank, great ash trees stand.
Not theirs the oak's round massive lines,
Nor measured symmetry of pines,
Each, vast yet limber, in his place
Grows with an undictated grace.
High soars the feathery cloud of green,
Light, fluttering, touched with wavering sheen,
And rifted, where the sky shows through
In jewelled fretwork, lucent blue.

See how, like conscious creatures, they
Breathe in the blue soft Irish day,
And the delighted air receives
The lovely answer of their leaves,
To the soft wind among them playing
In ceaseless gentle motion swaying:
As when a woman fond and fair
Feels on her wealth of loose-piled hair
Her lover's hand, and, sweetly bent,
Whispers a sigh of mere content,
While faint and happy motions flow
Across her face and come and go,
So in the swaying boughs you guess
The gentle stir of happiness.

Such in their stateliness are these,
Born very nobles of the trees.
No strugglers, scant of light and air,
But fenced and favoured all with care,
And rooted where to heart's desire
Kindly the air and soil conspire.

Bounteous in beauty there they stand,
Bounteous in shelter to the land,
By their mere breathing making sweet
The air to creatures at their feet,
Fulfilling all their purpose meant
With glory and with ornament.

O perishable splendour, fraught
With mortal sadness to my thought!
Look what a tide of sap there heaves
In yonder sapling toward the leaves
With rustling seed-pods laden down,
And then—behold yon barren crown.
For of the band one giant there
Stands in the noon of summer bare.
No need to wait the wintry blast;
Leaf-time and fruitage long are past;
The naked boughs but last to show
How one has gone, how all must go.
And when sad ebbing of the sap
Wrecks that brave phalanx, gap by gap,

Alas! what rabble shall be found
Crowding upon the vacant ground!

And, as I looked, I was aware
Of other orders passing there,
Of other goodly lives that stand
Stately and spacious in the land,
Of gallant creatures, born to life
Exempt from toil, exempt from strife,
That in this age's bitter mood
Shall scarcely find their stock renewed,
Till some sad morning wakes, and sees
No more such folk, no more such trees.

## IRELAND

Ireland, O Ireland! centre of my longings,
Country of my fathers, home of my heart!
Overseas you call me: *Why an exile from me?*
*Wherefore sea-severed, long leagues apart?*

As the shining salmon, homeless in the sea depths,
Hears the river call him, scents out the land,
Leaps and rejoices in the meeting of the waters,
Breasts weir and torrent, nests in the sand;

Lives there and loves; yet with the year's returning,
Rusting in the river, pines for the sea;
Sweeps back again to the ripple of the tideway,
Roamer of the waters, vagabond and free.

Wanderer am I, like the salmon of thy rivers;
London is my ocean, murmurous and deep,
Tossing and vast; yet through the roar of London
Comes to me thy summons, calls me in sleep.

Pearly are the skies in the country of my fathers,
Purple are thy mountains, home of my heart:
Mother of my yearning, love of all my longings,
Keep me in remembrance, long leagues apart.

## OUT IN THE DARK

Oh, up the brae, and up and up, beyont the fairy thorn,
It's there they hae my baby laid, that died when he was born.
Afore the priest could christen him to save his soul, he died.
"It never lived at all," they said.—'Twas livin' in my side.
For many a day an' many a night, an' weary night and day,
I kent him livin' at my heart, I carena what they say.
For many a day an' many a night I wearied o' unrest,
But now I'm sore to hae my wean back hidden in my breast.

He'll sure be thinkin' long for me, an' wearyin' his lone
Up in thon corner by the whins wi' neither cross nor stone:
Ay, tho' I'd died wi' him itself, they wouldna let us be—
The corner o' a field for him, the holy ground for me.
Thare many a wean that lies wi' him, and none that got a name,
Thare many a wife, hard put till it, was glad that dead they came,
Ay, many a man that scarcely minds a child o' his lies there;
But och! 'tis cruel hard to quit the first you'd ever bear.
The graves are all that tiny that they'd hardly raise a mound,
And couples o' a Sunday do be coortin' on thon ground,

An' thare none that thinks upon them; but my
heart'll be there still,
On the sod among the bracken an' the whins
upon the hill.
I'd be feared to come o' night there, for the hill
is fairy ground;
But thare maybe more nor fairies dancin' in the
fairy round—
Och, an' if I only thought it! sure I'd let them
do their worst,
An' I'd go to see my baby, tho' I be to be
accursed.
But I'll never reach my wean now, neither here
nor in the sod,
An' I'm better wi' the Christians an' the souls
that's saved for God—
Och, to feel his fingers on me, an' to clasp him
when he smiled!
Sure ye'd think there'd be one heaven for the
mother an' the child.

## MATER SEVERA

Where the huge Atlantic swings heavy water eastward,
Ireland, square to meet it, shoulders off the seas:
Wild are all her coasts with war of cliff and billow,
On her northern moorland is little sheltered ease.

Well is with the salmon, ranger of her rivers,
Well is with the mackerel shoaling in each bay,
Dear is all the land to the lonely snipe and curlew:
Ay, but for its manfolk—a bitter lot have they.

Thankless is the soil: men trench and delve and labour
Black and heartless peat amid barren knowes of stone:
Then, to win a living, overseas they travel,
And their women gather, if God pleases, what was sown.

Harvesters a-homing from the golden tilth of England,
Where they sweat to cope with the increase of teeming years,
Find too oft, returning sick with others' plenty,
Sunless autumn dank upon green and spindling ears.

Or a tainted south wind brings upon the root-crop
Stench of rotting fibre and green leaf turning black:

Famine, never distant, stalks nearer now and
nearer,
Bids them rake like crows amid mussel-beds
and wrack.

Bleak and grey to man is the countenance of
Nature,
Bleak her soil below him, bleak her sky above:
Wherefore, then, by man is her rare smile so
cherished,
Paid her niggard bounty with so lavish love?

Not the slopes of Rhine with such yearning are
remembered,
Not your Kentish orchards, not your Devon
lanes.
'Tis as though her sons for that ungentle
mother
Knew a mother's tenderness, felt a mother's
pains.

Many an outward-bound, as the ship heads under Tory,
Clings with anguished eyes to the barren Fanad shore:
Many a homeward-bound, as they lift the frowning Foreland,
Pants to leap the leagues to his desolate Gweedore.

There about the ways God's air is free and spacious,
Warm are chimney-corners there, warm the kindly heart:
There the soul of man takes root, and through its travail
Grips the rocky anchorage till the life-strings part.

## THE WOMAN OF BEARE

*Ebbing, the wave of the sea*
*Leaves, where it wantoned before,*
*Wan and naked the shore,*
*Heavy the clotted weed:*
*And in my heart, woe is me!*
*Ebbs a wave of the sea.*

I am the Woman of Beare,
Foul am I that was fair:
Gold-embroidered smocks I had,
Now in rags am hardly clad.

Arms, now so poor and thin,
Staring bone and shrunken skin,
Once were lustrous, once caressed
Chiefs and warriors to their rest.

Not the sage's power, nor lone
Splendour of an agèd throne,
Wealth I envy not, nor state:
Only women-folk I hate.

On your heads, while I am cold,
Shines the sun of living gold;
Flowers shall wreathe your necks in May;
For me, every month is grey.

Yours the bloom: but ours the fire,
Even out of dead desire.
Wealth, not men, ye love; but when
Life was in us, we loved men.

Fair the men, and wild the manes
Of their coursers on the plains;
Wild the chariots rocked, when we
Raced by them for mastery.

Lone is Femen: vacant, bare,
Stands in Bregon Ronan's Chair,
And the slow tooth of the sky
Frets the stones where my dead lie.

The wave of the great sea talks:
Through the forest winter walks.
Not to-day by wood and sea
Comes King Diarmuid here to me.

I know what my king does:
Through the shivering reeds, across
Fords no mortal strength may breast,
He rows—to how chill a rest!

Amen! Time ends all.
Every acorn has to fall.
Bright at feasts the candles were,
Dark is here the house of prayer.

I, that when the hour was mine,
Drank with kings the mead and wine,
Drink whey-water now, in rags,
Praying among shrivelled hags.

Amen! Let my drink be whey,
Let me do God's will all day—
And, as upon God I call,
Turn my blood to angry gall.

Ebb, flood, and ebb: I know
Well the ebb, and well the flow,
And the second ebb, all three—
Have they not come home to me?

Came the flood that had for waves
Monarchs, mad to be my slaves,
Crested as by foam with bounds
Of wild steeds and leaping hounds.

Comes no more that flooding tide
To my silent dark fireside.
Guests are many in my hall,
But a hand has touched them all.

Well is with the isle that feels
How the ocean backward steals,
But to me my ebbing blood
Brings again no forward flood.

*Ebbing, the wave of the sea*
*Leaves, where it wantoned before,*
*Changed past knowing the shore,*
*Lean and lonely and grey;*
*And far and farther from me*
*Ebbs the wave of the sea.*

## A LAY OF OSSIAN AND PATRICK

I TELL you an ancient story
  Learnt on an Irish strand,
Of lonely Ossian returning
  Belated from fairyland

To a land grown meek and holy,
  To a land of mass and bell,
Under the hope of heaven,
  Under the dread of hell.

It tells how the bard and warrior,
  Last of a giant race,
Wrestled a year with Patrick,
  Answering face to face,



6414

Mating the praise of meekness
With vaunt of the warrior school,
And the glory of God the Father
With the glory of Finn MacCool

Until at the last the hero,
Through fasting and through prayer,
Came to the faith of Christians,
And turned from the things that were.

When the holy bread was broken,
And the water wet on his brow,
And the last of the fierce Fianna
Had spoken the Christian vow

In a sudden glory Patrick,
Seeing the fierce grown mild,
Laughed with joy on his convert,
Like father on first-born child.

"Well was for you, O Ossian,
You came to the light," he said;
"And now I will show you the torment
From which to our God you fled."

Then with a pass of his crozier
He put a spell on the air
And there fell a mist on the eyeballs
Of Ossian standing there.

Shapes loomed up through the darkness,
And "Now," says the saint, "look well:
See your friends the Fianna,
And all their trouble in hell."

Ossian stared through the darkness,
Saw, as the mist grew clear,
Legions of swarth-hued warriors
Raging with sword and spear:

Footmen, huge and misshapen,
Stiffened with snarling ire;
Chariots with hell-black stallions
Champing a spume of fire

And all of the grim-faced battle
With clash and yell and neigh
Dashed on a knot of warriors
Set in a rank at bay.

Ossian looked, and he knew them,
Knew each man of them well,
Knew his friends, the Fianna,
There in the pit of hell.

There was his very father,
Leader of all their bands,
Finn, the terrible wrestler,
Griping with giant hands:

Oscar with edged blade smiting,
  Caoilté with charging lance,
And Diarmuid poising his javelin,
  Nimble as in the dance:

Conan, the crop-eared stabber,
  Aiming a slant-way stroke,
And the fiery Lugach leaping
  Where the brunt of battle broke.

But in front of all by a furlong,
  There in the hell-light pale,
Was the champion, Gull MacMorna,
  Winding a monstrous flail.

And still the flail as he swung it
  Sang through the maddened air,
Singing the deeds of heroes,
  A song of the days that were.

It swung with the shrilling of pipers,
It smote with a thud of drums,
It leapt and it whirled in battle,
Crying, "Gull MacMorna comes."

It leapt and it smote, and the devils
Shrieked under every blow;
With the very wind of its whistling
Warriors were stricken low.

It swept a path through the army
Wide as a winter flood,
And down that lane the Fianna
Charged in a wash of blood.

Patrick gazed upon Ossian:
But Ossian watched to descry
The surf and the tide of battle
Turn, as in days gone by.

And lo! at the sudden onslaught
The fighters of Eire made,
And under the flail of MacMorna,
The host of the foemen swayed,

Broke; and Ossian, breathless,
Heard the exultant yell
Of his comrades hurling the devils
Back to the wall of hell

And the sword-blades reaped like sickles,
And the javelins hissed like hail,
And louder and ever louder
Rose the song of the flail,

As whirling in air the striker
Sang clear, or thudded dull,—
When, woe! the tug on a sudden
Snapped in the grasp of Gull.

Hand-staff and striker parted;
The song of the flail was dumb—
On the heart of Ossian, listening,
Fell that silence numb.

And oh! for a time uncounted
He watched with straining eyes
The tide of the devils' battle
Quicken and turn and rise.

He watched the Fianna's onset
Waver and hang in doubt,
He watched his leaderless comrades
Swept in a struggling rout.

But Gull, with a shield before him,
Crouched on the battle ground,
And there in the track of slaughter
Tore at what he found,

Until in the crash and tumult,
And dashed with a bloody rain,
He had knotted his flail together
With sinews torn from the slain.

Then, as the gasping Fianna
Felt their endeavour fail,
Chanting their ancient valour
Rose the voice of the flail.

And again in the stagnant ebbing
Of their blood began to flow
The flood of a surging courage,
The hope of a crowning blow

And the heart of their comrade watching
Stirred with joy to behold
Feats of his bygone manhood,
Strokes that he knew of old.

Again he beheld the stubborn
Setting of targe to targe,
Again he beheld the rally
Swell to a shattering charge

And surely now the Fianna
Must slaughter and whelm the foe
In a fierce and final triumph,
Lords of the realm below.

As they leapt in a loosened phalanx,
Climbing on heaps of slain:
—And again Gull's wizard weapon
Flew on a stroke in twain.

For a time and times uncounted
Ossian endured the sight
Of the endless swaying tumult,
The ebb and flow of the fight.

His face grew lean with sorrow,
And hunger stared from his eyes,
And the labouring breath from his bosom
Broke in heavy sighs.

Patrick watched, and he wondered,
And at last in pity spoke:
"Vexed is your look, O Ossian,
As your very heart were broke.

"Courage, O new-made Christian:
Great is my joy in you:
I would like it ill on a day of grace
My son should have aught to rue.

"Therefore for these your comrades
I give you a wish to-day
That shall lift them out of their torment
Into some better way.

"Speak! be bold in your asking,
Christ is strong to redeem."
—Ossian turned to him sudden,
Like one awaked from a dream.

His eye was fierce as an eagle's,
And his voice had a trumpet's ring,
As when at the Fenian banquets
He lifted his harp to sing.

"I ask no help of the Father,
I ask no help of the Son,
Nor of the Holy Spirit,
Ever Three in One.

"This for my only asking,
And then let might prevail,—
*Patrick, give Gull MacMorna*
*An iron tug to his flail.*"

Patrick is dead, and Ossian;
  Gull to his place is gone;
But the words and the deeds of heroes
  Linger in twilight on

In a twilight of fireside tellings
  Lit by the poet's lay,
Lighting the gloom of hardship,
  The night of a needy day.

And still the Gael, as he listens
  In a land of mass and bell
Under the hope of heaven,
  Under the dread of hell

Thinks long, like age-spent Ossian,
  For the things that are no more,
For the clash of meeting weapons,
  And the mad delight of war.

## A SONG OF DEFEAT

1903

Not for the lucky warriors
—The winner at Waterloo,
Or him of a newer name,
Whom loud-voiced triumphs acclaim
Victor against the few—
Not for these, O Eire,
I build in my heart to-day
The lay of your sons and you.

I call to your mind to-day,
Out of the mists of the past,
Many a hull and many a mast
Black in the bight of the bay
Over against Ben Edair;

And the lip of the ebbing tideway all
Red with the life of Gael and Gall,
And the Danes in a headlong slaughter sent:
—And the women of Eire keening
For Brian, slain at his tent.

Mother, O grey sad mother,
Love, with the troubled eyes,
For whom I marshal to-day
The sad and splendid array,
Calling the lost to arise
—As some queen's courtier unbidden
Might fetch her gems to the sun,
Praising the glory and glow
Of all that was hers to show—
Eire, love Brian well,
For Brian fought, and he fell:
But Brian fought, and he won:
God! that was long ago!

Nearer and dearer to you,
Eire, Eire mavrone,
(List to a name of your own,
O sweet name, My Sorrow!)
Are the suns that flamed and faded
In a night that had no morrow.

I call to your mind Red Hugh,
And the Castle's broken ward:
I call to your mind O'Neill,
And the fight at the Yellow Ford:
—And the ships afloat on the main,
Bearing O'Donnell to Spain,
For the flame of his quick and leaping soul
To be quenched in a venomed bowl:
—And the shore by the Swilly's shadows,
And the Earls pushed out through the foam,
And O'Neill in his grave-clothes lying
With the wish of his heart in Ireland,
And his body cold in Rome.

I call to your mind Benburb
And the stubborn Ulster steel,
And the triumph of Owen Roe:
Clonmel, and the glorious stand
Of the younger Hugh O'Neill:
—And Owen dead at Derry,
And Cromwell loosed on the land.

I call to your mind Sarsfield,
And the battle in Limerick street,
The mine and the shattered wall,
And the battered breach held good,
And William full in retreat:
—And, at the end of all,
Wild Geese rising on clamorous wing
To follow the flight of an alien king.
And the hard-won treaty broken
And the elder faith oppressed,
And the blood—but not for Ireland—
Red upon Sarsfield's breast.

Ended, the roll of the great
And famous leaders of armies,
The shining lamps of the Gael,
Who wrestled awhile with fate
And broke the battle on foemen,
Ere the end left widowed Eire
Lone with her desolate wail.

Lone, yet unforsaken:
Out of no far dim past
Call I the names of the last
Who strove and suffered for Eire.
Saddest and nearest of all,
See how they flock to the call,
The troop of the famous felons:
Who won no joy of the sword,
Who tasted of no reward
But the faint flushed dawn of a wan sick hope,
And over whose lives there dangled
Ever the shame of the rope.

I call to your mind Lord Edward,
Tone with his mangled throat,
Emmet high on the gallows,
O'Brien, Mitchel, and Meagher—
Ay, and of newer note
Names that Eire will not forget,
Though some have faded in far-off lands,
And some have passed by the hangman's hands,
And some—are breathing yet.

Not for these, O Eire,
Not for these, or thee,
Pipers, trumpeters, blaring loud,
The throbbing drums and the colours flying,
And the long-drawn muffled roar of the crowd,
The voice of a human sea:
Theirs it is to inherit
Fame of a finer grace,
In the self-renewing spirit
And the untamable heart,

Ever defeated, yet undefeated,
Of thy remembering race:
For their names are treasured apart,
And their memories green and sweet,
On every hillside and every mart
In every cabin, in every street,
Of a land, where to fail is more than to triumph,
And victory less than defeat.

## A SONG OF VICTORY

1923

Ditches of mud
Where the boot clung till it tore,
Snow-cold water thigh-deep,
Holes in the ground for shelter:
It was not well to be there.

Something glimpsed in the dark:
What did you fire at?
Seldom a form clear-seen,
Never the face of a foeman.
Strange, impersonal war,
No heat, in it, no hate.

But in the heart of night
Sudden crash of the guns:
All the horizon
Pulsed with leaping flashes,
Wide-shooting flashes of anger,
A terrible nation striking.

Then in the grey dank dawn,
Search for one missing.
There in a tangle of wire,
Posts fallen, ruin of sandbags,
What is that darkness?
Wedged in, frost-bound:
Lift him, you, by the head—
—There is no head, sir.—

After a week of that,
Two weeks or three weeks,

Down the trench slowly filing,
Laden creatures, uncouth,
Encumbered, mud-clogged,
Stumble along;
Till at the last, a road,
Open space, deliverance:
And the war-beaten, trench-weary men
Form in a column,
And tramping back to their billets,
Whistle a tune to march to.
Would not your heart be proud of them?

Yonder behind the line,
We met while we rested,
Other men of our country
Who had not counted us friends.
There at ease for a moment,
With the common danger behind us,

About us, before us,
We drank and were pleasant together,
We made comrades.

And from the ditches of mud,
From the pit of destruction,
Word went back to Ireland:
We have met, we have spoken,
Who at home would never have spoken,
Strange to think of it.

And Ireland sitting at home,
Far away from the danger,
Began to think of it,
Even began to feel
A stir in her stiffness.

Suddenly flashed to us there
Word from Ireland:
Ditches of blood in Ireland,
Widening chasms.

We trod our way to the end;
We were part of victory:
And in the face of the world
Ireland disowned us.

Ditches of blood in Ireland.
Hate speeding the bullet
Where man stalked man like a beast,
Aimed, brought down his quarry,
Saw him writhing:
Ditches of blood in Ireland.

So in the end they won,
Won for Ireland.

Grey head of my comrade,
Gallant and comely,
Who in the wider battle
Marched with the young,
With the young men of Ireland,
Ay, and of Ulster,
To a day of high achievement,
And in a moment of victory
Fell:
You, not unforeknowing,
Not without wrench at heartstrings,
Yet in a jubilant sacrifice
Offered your life.

Was it for nothing, my comrade?
Is there atonement of healing? Is there reward?
Not yet.

Not for you, who loved Ireland
In a lifetime of service without self-seeking,
Not for you the morose
Sour-visaged enjoyment,
Seeing the men who spurned you
Spurned in their turn.
Rather, O loyal heart,
It may be your time of purgation,
Idle, powerless, apart,
To look upon Ireland.

But when through travail
And purging of evil humours,
This disfigured, self-loathing
And desperate land
From the valley of humiliation
Struggles at last:
When cool air of the mountains,

Sunlight, fresh-running waters,
Wide-sweeping cloud-shadow on meadow
With bird-song at dawn,
Bring back her natural kindness,
Nurse her into serenity,
Renew her peace,
It may be, O comrade, that Ireland
Casting a backward glance on the road she has travelled,
Beyond the descent into victory,
Past the ditches of blood,
Will turn and yearn in her heart for the valour she once rejected,
For the wisdom she cast aside;
Will cry in the face of the world, *My faithful, my children,*
Will cry to her own sick heart,
*My faithful, my children,*
*My lovers who never hurt me,*
*You also are Ireland.*

And it may be that Ireland
Crying it so, will take courage
To tread on the forward track.

This, O comrade of mine,
This were your recompense.

## GLENCAR

Few roads and far to grey Glencar
Where Caragh ripples past,
Yet there, mavrone, shall be your throne
When I win home at last.

On alien soil I bleed and toil:
The soldier sworn of France,
I follow where her bugles blare,
Her eagles glint and glance.

But ships may ride yet on some tide
Leagued to restore our rights,
And I may head the men I've led
In half a hundred fights.

But till that be, astore machree,
For me nor love nor land:
I plant no foot on shamrock-root
Till I come sword in hand.

Few roads and far to grey Glencar
And life a-wasting fast:
Yet there, mavrone, should be your throne,
Could I win home at last.

## CORRANBINNIE

In the Corranbinnie channel, oh, the fleet was
gathered thick,
From the bridge to Catharine's Island, you could
travel deck to deck:
From the eastward and the westward, smacks
were mustered, big and small,
To the bay of Corranbinnie, 'mid the cliffs of
Donegal.

On the shore by Corranbinnie, 'neath a glimmer-
ing autumn sky,
Men spoke low to one another; for the sea ran
cruel high.

No air of wind was stirring, but it stormed the crags with might
And on each low black spine of rock the wash was churned to white.
Yet the bay was full of herring that to-morrow might be gone,
And a rich and plenteous harvest there lay waiting to be won,
So they moored their smacks up channel, from the surf they moored them far,
And they pulled their creaking cobles out across the plunging bar.

Sunset flared and flickered wildly as the nets were shot that night:
Overhead the circling sea-gulls screamed in clamorous delight
For the shoals were up and moving; men could smell them on the tide,
Fathom-deep could spy the flashing where there turned a silver side,

MARYMOUNT COLLEGE
TARRYTOWN, N. Y.

And the buoys dipped low and under as the herring took the mesh—
Little cared such lucky fishers though the breeze was rising fresh.

On the sudden, with a blackness and a gusty scud of wind,
From the west it swung to northward; came a raging sea behind.
As a whale among the herring, so the storm among its prey
Plunged, and drove them, scattered wildly, broadcast over all the bay.
Oh, they cut their nets adrift then, with their store of silvery prize:
But more than nets were missing when the morning cleared the skies.
Some split on Carrigfodha, some where now the beacons are,
But the most were swamped and shattered in the fury of the bar.

To the shore by Corranbinnie, when the sea was
calm and fair,
Came a woman out of Scotland, after word had
travelled there.
Her face was young and comely, but her eyes
were strange and set;
In her hand she bore a clasp-knife and a trail of
herring net.
Then on the bare broad sea-beach she stripped
her to the skin,
Out she waded in the water, deep and far she
waded in.
Breast-deep by Corranbinnie, looking out across
the bar,
She gashed her white breast open, red and wide
she left the scar,
And in the crimson fountain that trickled down
her side
She steeped the net to redness, then cast it on
the tide.

I, a widow out of Scotland, lay a curse upon this bay,
On this bay that drowned our husbands, swept our share of life away.
Too rich in fish you ever were, O Corranbinnie shore,
You lured the men that married us, you lured the lads we bore.
From the light of our warm firesides to the shades of your cold cliffs
They were lured to face the winter and its tempests in their skiffs.
By this net, 'twas twined for herring and 'tis barked in widow's blood,
I throw my curse upon you, O salt and bitter flood.
Let never herring shoal here, let no man dip a net,
Till a widow's nightly longing shall have learned how to forget,

Till the care that eats into me shall have passed
and set me free,
Till the boy that I have growing be too old to
go to sea.

Blood flowed while she was speaking, and they
say the sea was red
From the strand by Killyhoey to the cliffs at
Breaghy Head.
For a generation's passing, if so be the truth is
told,
Came no fish to Corranbinnie, till the young
men had grown old:
But there came no fleet from Scotland, let the
fish be there or no,
For the witchcraft wrought upon them with the
power of woman's woe.

There be fish and fishers plenty now in Corran-
binnie bay,
There be smacks with goodly tackle, laden deep
with precious prey,

There be nets weighed down and heavy while
the fishers count their share,
And ashore be hearts more heavy with a weight
of woman's care.

## THE QUEEN'S CHRONICLER

I HAVE a weakness—every one confesses
To some such small delinquency as this—
For old Brantôme, although the world professes
To find him shocking, and, indeed, he is:
But, after all, the work which so distresses
Our moral age was not so bad in his:
He dedicates it to a dear dead duke,
And may have thought it quite beyond rebuke.

Besides, he wrote two books, and one of them
Treats of great queens or ladies of the court,
A volume no archbishop need condemn:
And if at times these ladies took their sport,

The chronicler, with his discreet "Ahem!"
Glosses the matter. Were they not, in short,
Suns of the world? 'Twould never do for one
Mere mortal to monopolise the sun.

His very fairest fair, his saint of saints,
Is hapless Mary Stuart, loveliest
Of all the queens that truth or fancy paints,
And, Brantôme gives his word, among the best.
In France he saw her happy; her complaints
He heard in bitter Scotland. Like the rest,
He worshipped, being a man: sat down to write,
And leaves her character one spotless white.

How she was born to greatness, and how bred
In loveliness, he tells, how graced in arts,
How many a wise and witty thing she said,
Capped verse with Ronsard and displayed rare parts

In Latin speeches: then, how she was wed,
And, more than Queen of France, was Queen of hearts:
Yet Queen of France she was for two bright years,
Dismally ended with a widow's tears.

But her white beauty in her solemn weeds,
As royal fashion was, of purest white,
Wore the dim radiance that all else exceeds,
Like a June lily in the moon's pale light.
'Twas the pathetic loveliness that pleads,
Rather than claims our homage as a right,
When she, sweet derelict, for good or ill,
Set out to voyage at the tempest's will.

Rough Scotland summoned her; and, truly, fain
She was to put her queenship clean away
And be content with but her dower, Touraine.
Yet the harsh regents urged: she might not stay.

So with great company and gilded train
(For all the Court convoyed her on her way)
She came to Calais: spent there, Brantôme tells,
A week in the sad ritual of farewells.

Then she perforce embarked; but ere the galleys
Had left the port, another ship set sail,
Struck on a rock not half a league from Calais,
And Mary's self heard drowning sailors wail,
Yet might have been at Paris in her palace
For all that speediest succour could avail:
A strange dark omen, that she was not slow
So to interpret, being loath to go.

Yet forth they fared, and soon a fair wind blew:
Chained galley-slaves had rest: but she, poor Queen,
Stood on the poop and watched while fainter grew
The shore where all her happiness had been:
And still her cry was "Adieu, France, adieu,"
Till night drew on and nothing could be seen

—All this we all have read in song and ballad,
But Brantôme adds, she only ate a salad.

His small familiar touches are delightful,
Making one see—She lay on deck all night,
Awaiting dawn: and fate was not so spiteful
But that with morning France was still in sight
And she herself had bid the watch at nightfall
To rouse her, fearing nothing, with the light.
So for a few sad hours she found relief
In iteration of an exile's grief.

Till France was lost. Then she began to pray
For English ships to drive them back perforce;
But the wind bore her northward, and the grey
Sea fog encompassed them; they heard the hoarse
Surf on a stony coast, and groped their way
Till Leith was near and beacons marked their course.

But Chastellard leaps up on deck and cries,
"Light us no lamps: we have our lady's eyes."

Poor gallant poet-madman!—Little show
Of gallantry received them at the port,
And Mary wept aloud to see the row
Of sorry hackneys trapped in sorry sort:
How far unlike the glitter and the glow,
The pomp and pageantry of France's Court!
And when she reached her house of Holyrood
The welcome boded little joy or good.

For from the very first a certain friction
Declared itself; one might have said a strife:
Her almoner gave a rash benediction
To Protestants; they all but took his life
In Mary's presence—no obscure prediction
Of Rizzio shrieking and the bloody knife.
And when the frightened queen withdrew, a number
Of bagpipes skirled, to lull her into slumber.

Yet all the sunshine was not left in France,
And Scotland, too, had hearts that could take fire,
As what heart would not? for a single glance
Of eyes that seemed the very world's desire.
And Brantôme tells us how she led the dance,
And when she donned their barbarous attire
(Meaning by that, no doubt, the Highland plaid)
What a bewitching Highland lass she made!

Indeed, such details make the staple stuff
Of all his chronicle: he tells us little
Of Knox's preachments, Murray's plots and rough
Hard-fisted politics: repeats no tittle
Of all the scandal, though 'twas rife enough.
As to her plotting Darnley's death, poor wittol,
He scorns the charge: hers was no cruel nature,
And Bothwell was a rude unpleasing creature.

Alas! her subjects were not all so nice
And charitable. They imprisoned her,
But gaolers too had hearts that were not ice:
So she escaped and made a mighty stir,
Levied a gallant army in a trice
And headed it like any valiant sir.
But when Lord Murray took the field to meet her,
Alack! the gallant army grew discreeter.

They left her basely.—So began the long
Captivity: the years grew to nineteen.
The captive plotted, which, no doubt, was wrong:
So in the twentieth came the closing scene.
She died, we learn, for reasons good and strong:
At any rate, she died as should a queen.
Her gentlewomen told the tale; its thrill
Of pity quickens Brantôme's pages still.

For, when the Lords Commissioners appeared
In that grey prison-house at Fotheringay,

She welcomed them, nor seemed as one who feared,
Nor loath to hear what they were loath to say,
But told them, slow captivity endeared
Relief that came to her in any way:
Only, she craved their courtesy to accord her
The needful space to set her house in order.

But Shrewsbury checked her roughly: "Madam, no:
To-morrow morning between seven and eight,
Be ready!" Paulet bade her undergo
Her doom with fortitude. She answered straight,
She thanked him, but she needed none to show
The way in which a queen should bear her fate:
Still, since the end was urgent, that at least
She asked for the attendance of her priest.

It was denied her. Well (we all can quote
Lucan), the gods are on the side that wins.

But once theology is well afloat
On a flood-tide, the devil surely grins.
At all events, Mary sat down and wrote
For general absolution of her sins.
It is, perhaps, the best way before dying:
Details are never quite so edifying.

This duty done, she set herself to make
Pathetic little presents to each friend—
"This ring, this kerchief—wear it for my sake—"
Spending in gifts all that she had to spend,
Save one rich velvet: "This," said she, "I take;
I must go somewhat fine to meet my end."
Tranquil and kind, consoling those that wept,
She moved among them; then withdrew and slept,

Yet rose ere dawn and robed her and prayed long,
Long, long, and passionately. Then she drew
Close to the flickering fire where in a throng
Huddled her womenfolk, pale, faint, and few;

And spoke and cheered them, bidding them be strong
Against the work that there was yet to do:
For they must witness all and how she bore
The worst.—Then came a rough knock at the door.

Black-robed she rose, and in her hand she took
A little ivory crucifix. The sight
Made those that entered pause and stand to look,
For colour mounted in her cheek so bright
That all the years away that moment shook
And left her young as on her bridal night.
Then, ere they spoke, she said, distinct and slow:
"Gentlemen, I am ready. Let us go."

And never, Brantôme writes, to any ball
With a more courtly or more winning grace
Moved she than when she swept into the hall
Before the gazers crowded in their place;

Nor could the hideous scaffold there appal
The courage that was radiant in her face.
'Twas draped in common crape, meagre and mean,
As though she died a felon, not a queen.

Scant courtesy had she of them. As she spoke
Tranquilly there, commending to the nation
Her son, beseeching kindness for her folk,
And for herself to God made supplication,
A Protestant divine in on her broke,
Pestered her with contentious exhortation,
Railed at her crucifix, would not let her pray,
Even at the block, to God in her own way.

Yet all this rudeness had no power to wreck
Her patient dignity, and even the cry
Wrung from her women she was prompt to check
With finger laid on lip and warning eye.
Then they came near to help her bare her neck
And decently apparel her to die,

But the rough headsman tore away her vest
And stripped to all the marvel of her breast

Yet asked her pardon; and her voice was heard
In gentle answer with unlabouring breath.
And then her eyes were bandaged; her last word
Was "Lord, into Thy hands"—and then came death.
Blow fell on blow and blow, till at the third
The headsman cried, "God save Elizabeth!"
Then lifted up the head and in men's sight
Tore off the coif, to show the hair was white.

O envious heart of woman! Though she gain
A thousand triumphs in a thousand ways,
Yet in her inmost soul she most is fain
For woman's worship and for woman's praise.
Throne, statecraft, victory, all, all, were vain:
She craved for roses 'mid her sombre bays.
Elizabeth was wooed for power or place;
But men had died to look on Mary's face.

Why else was there poured out that brimming
vial
Of malice?—Grant that it was wise to smirch
Her name with charges unapproved by trial,
Yet why withhold the priest? why that
research
For ignominy? why the last denial
Even of burial by her mother Church?
I cannot pardon to the great Queen Bess
This paltry posthumous vindictiveness.

Well, there they stand, pursuer and pursued,
Famous alike now by the common voice.
One is the bad, no doubt, and one the good:
In one the gods, in one the devils, rejoice.
One has been canonised by Mr. Froude,
The other by old Brantôme: take your choice.
Say, for the name that each has after death,
Would you be Mary or Elizabeth?

One stands revealed to our astounded eyes
The strangest figure seen on any stage:

No reek of adulation can disguise
That nightmare harridan, ignoring age,
Grotesquely pushing death aside with cries
Of her fierce will's indomitable rage:
With power to the last moment unabated,
And to the last, served, courted, worshipped,
hated.

The other overawes the noise of shame,
Silences it with music of her choir,
Too fair for judgment, too adored for blame,
Like Helen glorious from the Trojan fire:
Her face is in all hearts, about her name
Whispers the sighing voice of all desire.
—O ageless beauty, O immortal youth,
I think old Brantôme merely spoke the truth.

## IN THE CHURCHYARD

The plumed black horses pacing go
In formal hideous pomp of woe.
Lo, this man's mother there;
So must my mother fare.

Rough hireling hands, that have not known
Her living, lift the coffin down,
And ranged on either hand,
Strangers and kin, we stand.

They there, we here, and she between,
So near me, I could almost lean
And touch her bed; yet thus
Remote how far from us!

All changed, all passing—save her hair:
Death sets no sign of lordship there.
Years frosted it before,
Now it shall change no more.

Why not have given her to kind Earth
That from her daisies might have birth,
That she into the grass
After her kind might pass?

That cold, unsightly, pitiless box
Never again unseals, unlocks.
How close clamped edges fit!
Vain to press lips on it.

Hark! the first clay in handfuls thrown,
And then the reader's monotone:
Out under heaven here
It scarce arrests the ear.

It stops. With dreadful instant speed
Men fall to work, as if indeed
There were a life to save
By filling up a grave.

O set grey eyes of men she bore,
Watching the trench fill more and more!
Set eyes—no tear is shed;
A strong race she has bred.

Still shovelling, shovelling on the dead;
And then, one stroke with back of spade
To show that all is done,
Wage earned and resting won.

Kind hands range flowers on the loose clay,
Poor pretty hothouse blossoms they,
Tarnished already; Death
Has touched them with his breath.

Is there no more, no more to do?
No more, no more; she has her due.
Leave her, come home again;
'Tis cold here in the rain.

Leave her to Nature; so 'tis best,
In that blind bosom lost, to rest.
Her separate life is done,
With Nature she is one.

Where Nature strikes, the scar will close,
And soon the sod together grows.
Her balm is Lethe; yet
We for remembrance fret,

And, as each breath men dying draw
Rebels against the falling law,
And with a kind of rage
Heaves up its bony cage

So strive we, when on Death we think,
Not into nothingness to sink.
Ah! if none soothe us, still
Nature is kind: Death will.

## KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

*"Le soleil ni la mort ne se peut regarder fixement."*

O HIGH-ASPIRING soul of man that reaches
Beyond the utmost vistas of the stars!
O frail and flinching sense that mars
The effect begun, and thwarts what wisdom teaches!

Man's mind has weighed the overwhelming Sun,
Conned and mapped out his race,
Perused the records flaming on his face,
And summed the courses he has left to run:
His very elements are thrown
Into man's crucible and known—
Yet can our eyes abide,
His noonday pride?

Known are the chemic laws
How, from what studied cause,
This mortal body must
Resolve itself to dust:
Yet lurks in silence of the tomb
Utter and fathomless intensity of gloom.
For, as in the Sun's face
Nothing is brighter or less bright,
But all one dazzling space
Of indistinguishable light,
So in all other dark
The accustomed sense some difference may mark;
But when we look on Death,
Albeit we strive with knowledge to control
Our tremors, and to heed what wisdom saith,
And bid our sense take comfort from our soul,
Yet Death's impenetrable black disguise
Dazzles our eyes.
And so each human generation stands,
Into the darkness stretching suppliant hands.

Behind that noontide splendour of the sun,
Athwart that luminous haze,
Could our abashèd gaze
Pierce, and a way be won,
A path for vision free,
What should our senses see?

An insupportable furnace, a soil burnt out and
charred,
A ball of lava half molten, a riven and fiery
shard,
Pitted with clefts and chasms, and every pithole
filled
With sulphurous flaming gases, its remnant of
sap distilled,
Distilled and for ever distilling, and fiercely
whirled through space,
Whirling, whirling, and whirling in mad and
meaningless race;
Parched and shrivelled and splitting, and doomed
to a day foretold,

When even the fiery life of the brute insensate
thing
Must flame and flicker away and sink to a torpid
cold,
And one more star shall shoot from its æon-
travelled ring.
Thus, ere men learnt the starry runes to spell,
Had mortal minds prefigured hell.

O bland, O wonder-working Sun!
Is this truth told of you?
Who in your splendour draw the dew
Through the soft night to fall
And crown your work begun,
O friend of all!
Ay, of the poorest cripple whose worn thatch
Gapes in the winter to the wind and rain:
Huddled he crouches by cold hearth to catch
Faint animation, till you come again.
Food, clothing, shelter, none are for his uses

Save such as very need almost refuses.
Love knows him not, and hardly Pity lingers
To gather fire and chafe his perished fingers.
Reckon his all, and when the reckoning's done
Nothing he has, save only you, O Sun!
But when once more your bounty is bestowed,
He limps some score of paces down the road:
Tottering upon stiff knees and twisted toes,
And shaken with the palsy, forth he goes
And sits him down, and lets the summer shine
Visit his blood like wine:
Numb joints relax and frozen joys revive,
And for a little while 'tis good to be alive.

O Sun we live by and we love!
If you be but a hell above,
Then, Death we die by and we fear,
What were you, seen more near?
Slow surges in from unknown oceans wide
Life, like a tide.

In sweeps the eternal element, strong and fresh;
Faint felt at first, it gathers weight and force,
And backward hurls within the dykes of flesh
Another torrent of opposing course.
Then the flood knows its limit and grows slack,
While that stemmed current, sluggish, sickly, and chill,
Downward and downward pouring, beats Life back.
Then the tide turns, and all is borne away
On the resistless torrent of decay.
But those two forces, ere the ebb begins,
Before Life yields and Dissolution wins,
Hang, for the drawing of a single breath,
In sullen equipoise—and that is Death.

So frame the wise their answer. Death? the pause
Ordained by Nature's laws
In her unending strife,
Eternal interchange of life and life.

Yet till the human eye
Unflinching learn to face the Sun on high,
So long before Death's darkling veil
Must human senses quail.

"Slay if thou wilt, but slay me in the light!"
O cry of Ajax for the cheering Sun!
Yet of this common heritage, sun-right,
There are who, reft and utterly undone,
In pestilent alleys where the fever crawls,
Are hived like vermin among rotting walls.
What do they know of sunshine? what their share
In that impartial largess? Overhead
Hang murky wrappings of grime-laden air,
Changing the sun to brass, the sky to lead.
Hopeless, resourceless, sunless even, they own
One earthly help alone.
Some sink to brutishness, but Death is kind
And hides them up for ever out of mind;

Some chafe and pine, whom Death at last sets free;
Some toil until Death ends their misery.
O, more impartial than the very Sun,
By none desired, Death is denied to none.
All dread his coming, yet as he draws near
All cease to fear.
O Death! for at the least a moment's rest
They sink upon thy breast:
What cometh next they know not; yet, perchance,
In some expiring trance,
To eyes from dizziness of sense set free
Shines through the face they most desired to see.

## THE CAPTIVE POLAR BEAR

His dam lay, powerless now to help,
White fur on snow with one red stain:
A sailor caught the snarling whelp,
Who never swam the seas again.

Huge now, he lies behind the bars,
Stretches, and gapes, and idly rolls,
Too soft to face the winds and stars
That freeze above the icy poles.

Mangy and yellow-toothed and old
He lies, and lolls an inky tongue;
Yet in his brain's most inward fold
Still lives the world where he was young.

For still he keeps the sharp fish-head,
The sloping shoulder, the round limbs
To cleave the water, for the dread
Of all that by the icefield swims.

Still upon keen, clear frosty days
There comes a stirring in his blood,
Inklings of his forefathers' ways,
Of prey and battle in the flood.

He scents the blood of what they slew,
He dreams, what he can never feel,
How the snatched salmon quivers through,
And how they tore the oily seal.

Forward and backward, like the tide,
With ceaseless motion shambling slow,
He sways himself from side to side,
As if he rode the rocking floe.

Or in his tank—how cramped and small
After wide waters of the pole!
Contemptuously from wall to wall
He surges with great wallowing roll.

He loves no keeper's hand; cold rage
Haunts him for ever in his cell;
Thus far he keeps his heritage,
Tameless and unapproachable.

## COWSLIPS

*Cowslips, sweetlips, smelling of the summer,*
*Coming with the cuckoo, bringing in the May,*
*Lifting heads in pastures, where the cattle spare you,*
*Waiting to be gathered when the children come to play.*

Daffodils were golden, nodding in the uplands,
Golden in the marshes flares the marigold:
Softer-hued the cowslips, winsomer and sweeter—
Sure the soul of flowers is the odour that they hold.

Faint and soft and honied, fragrant as the kine's breath,
Wafted airs of cowslips gladden London streets;

Yellow-speckled handfuls, pennyworths of sunshine,
To the dusty passers they are lavish of their sweets.

Not from London barrows came our Irish cowslips:
Tossed and cramped and prisoned all the night they've lain,
But when morning reddened, lest they should feel strangers,
Cowslips from each cutting kept a-nodding to the train.

Kindly was the thought for children who this Maytime
Weave no cowslip necklace, wind no cowslip ball:

London parks are gay with beds of guarded
blossom,
But, to pluck and treasure—not a cowslip in
them all.

*Cowslips, sweetlips, smelling of the country,*
*Coming with the cuckoo, bringing in the May,*
*Straight and tall and slender, springing in the*
*pastures,*
*Waiting to be gathered when the children*
*come to play.*

## THE SWIMMER

A CORRIDOR of rocks
Paved with blue lucent sea,
Less azure than the eyes
Of her, who down it swims:
Sun on the wave, that mocks
The sun's insistency
And close and closer lies
About those supple limbs.

Thus she from sea and sky,
Her wooers, tribute takes,
Not heedless how each clings
About her to caress:

Her head is raised so high
That no rash ripple slakes
The sun on it, or flings
Dimness on one dark tress.

Stretched forward on her blue
Delicious yielding bed,
She comes with swan-like pace
In motion that is rest:
Each impulse brings a new
Wave-light of beauty shed
On that illumined face,
That easy-breathing breast.

Upon that radiant calm
Is the entranced content
Of interchanging love,
Adoring and adored.
Swimming, she sings, her psalm
Of life, her ravishment
At joy, below, above
Her, lavished and outpoured.

Yet she, divinely wooed,
And pliant to the touch
Of deities of power,
May not withhold my part.
From her enchanted mood
Gains she herself so much
As I—who hoard that hour
For ever in my heart?

## LOST VISION

In the forest, among the ruddy pine trunks,
Where the russet footing muffles every tread,
Alleys tempt, and through the ranged assembly
Down never-ending vistas I am led.

My love has her dwelling in the forest,
I can feel her as I walk among the pines;
All the avenues of the wood lead to her
And my heart runs to her leaping down the lines.

All about her is a magic circle;
I can speak with her, can touch her, take her hand;
But she smiles, her eyes are kind and tranquil,
And a world divides me from her where I stand.

All the forest-land is haunted with her presence,
In the rustle of the bracken I can hear,
I can hear her in the swaying tree-tops;
In the dappled dance of shadow she is near.

For her sake I love the columned forest
Where the ways for ever meet, for ever part;
But I dread that I have lost my way for ever
To the green and sunny glade that is her heart.

Ah but, love, some day and for a moment
Break the circle; in the sunshine let me lie,
See again the eyes divinely altered,
Let me see you once again before I die.

## IF ALL OF MY SHIPS COME HOME

If all of my ships come home, my dear,
Deep-laden from bottom to deck,
I'll buy you bright diamonds to shine in your ear
And rubies to rope round your neck.
No queen shall be fine as this lady of mine
If all of my ships come home.

If half of my ships come home, my dear,
We'll travel to look for the rest;
The near shall be far and the far shall be near
And we'll speed from the East to the West.
You shall voyage in state then, with me for your mate,
If half of my ships come home.

If one of my ships comes home, my dear,
I'll build you a house on a hill,
With a garden to work in all through the sweet year
And roses to cut at your will.
You shall taste the good life of a cottager's wife
If one of my ships comes home.

But if none of my ships comes home, my dear,
If all of them sink in the wave,
Then, bankrupt, with nothing to forfeit or fear,
I'll bind me to service, your slave;
And gladly I'll take what you give for love's sake,
If none of my ships comes home.

## HER GARDEN

THERE is a garden that I know
Not grand in space nor rich in show;
A little London garden, bounded
By four low walls, and all around it
Are gardens, just the same to see,
But this is magic land to me.
For there her presence fills the place
And flowers take radiance from her face.
Yet, for her too these walls must bound,
Methinks, some dear enchanted ground
For we, where bees on blossom feed,
In love and laughter set the seed,
And every tendril of sweet-peas
Is tangled close with memories.

And, as I see for ever there
Glints of her bright breeze-lifted hair,
So must she too have met ere now
Some shadowy vision of a brow
Relaxed, smoothed out, and overflowed
With all the joy herself bestowed.

## HER PRAISE

Once, in a green and happy place,
I lay and watched my lady's face
Bloom like a flower in sun and air,
More lit than shaded by her hair.
The subtle tissue of her cheek
Filled me with dreams I could not speak,
For in her reverie it caught
The flickering ripple of each thought,
Yet of her deeper life the signs
Were writ in lines that were not lines.
So, on a sea that seems to rest
With motionless dream-laden breast,
Under smooth calm and ruffling flaw
The streaming currents set and draw.

Be that her symbol then—some sea,
Watched by the land, as she by me,
Through all its changes loved and sung,
Eternal, yet for ever young.
Yet not the storied waves, where flow
Nile's tropic flood and Alpine snow
Blent in one blue transmuting brine,
Could ever mingle and combine
Such opposites as frame yon fresh
And ancient miracle of flesh—
Deep wisdom from the sunset drawn
And babbling ecstasies of dawn.

See what deliberate splendour shows
In yonder crossed and grafted rose
Whose shape, whose texture, scent and hue
Are such as Eden never knew,
And yet it blossoms there as free
As any daisy star—So, she
Who leans in sunlight here among
Her flowers is flowerlike, soft and young.

And yet a hundred ages wrought
In stress and agony of thought,
Moulding the powers of earth and air
To womanhood, incarnate there.
That dewy freshness passed through flame,
That softness from the anvil came;
The Maker, bending o'er the mould,
Bade Pain the biting graver hold—
Ah, but, where Pain too sternly traced,
Love age by age the scar effaced
With healing touches; bade deploy
His glowing broidery of joy
To robe the tempered nerve and will,
As bending vines the laboured hill.

And so, through all the ages grown
To ripeness, as from Parian stone
Shaped, as from softest tissue spun,
—Diversely, exquisitely, one—
Time brought that loveliness to be
I, seeing, hold my breath to see.

## INSCRIPTION FOR A FOUNTAIN ERECTED IN MEMORY OF MABEL DEARMER WHO DIED IN SERBIA AND OF CHRISTOPHER DEARMER KILLED AT SULVA BAY

Proud of the war, all glorious went the son:
Loathing the war, all mournful went the mother.
Each had the same wage when the day was done:
Tell me, was either braver than the other?

They lay in mire, who went so comely ever:
Here, when you wash, let thought of them abide.
They knew the parching thirst of wound and fever:
Here, when you drink, remember them who died.

## A FRIEND'S GARDEN

Genius of the quiet hours,
Of June nightingales, and flowers
Steeped in cool delicious air—
Of hop gardens, and the rare
Mist from meadows lifting slow,
—Guard a cottage that I know.

Underneath the pine-clad crown
Of the topmost windy down,
Oaks, with hazel-scrub beneath,
Fringe about the purple heath.
There this cottage, hung with leaves,
Looking, as from under eaves
Birds look, out across the plain,
Nestles in a Kentish lane.

Here dwells Beauty, still devising
Beauties that, emparadising
Her small close of garden ground,
Deck the year as it goes round.
Cloud-pale iris; silver-stemmed
Poppies; lupins rain-begemmed;
Larkspurs bright as sea or sky,
Deep as lapis-lazuli.
Pink and gold, rock-roses small
Tumble from the terrace wall;
Tall strong growths and trailing graces
Thrive in their appointed places;
All that cluster, all that climb,
Come obedient to their time;
Not a colour but she uses,
Not a fragrance she refuses;
Roses riot everywhere
Near demurest lavender.
And all things that for her grow
Spread and burgeon out, although

Set with sweet deliberate care,
As if Nature flung them there
Lush and tangled like a brake.
—Draw the curtains when you wake,
Through the lattice thrust your head
And behold the garden spread
Jewelled in the morning dew,
Born afresh, and born for you.

Thus she dwells in her domain
Paramount—long may she reign—
Busy till late autumn ends
Storing sweetness for her friends,
Like a bee, in fragrant cells:
And with Beauty, Quiet dwells.
Wherefore, Genius, of your grace
Guard the secret of the place.
From this precinct turn away
All unworthy; rather, say,
Let none thitherward repair
Save those whom Beauty welcomes there.

## PORTRAIT OF A PAINTER

TO G. H.

When God, making you, designed
Something distant, shy, yet kind,
Sudden-friendly, without fear,
Like a robin perching near,

He, I think, remote aloft,
Planned your voice so low and soft
Just to hear the things you say,
Quaint and whimsical and gay.

And perhaps those lucid greys
In your frank and spacious gaze,
Went to frame a perfect eye
To possess earth's colour by.

But when He gave cunning hands
To fulfil the eye's demands,
Had He fears lest one great joy
Might your whole of life employ?

So, a rival to your art,
Pity overran your heart.
Ah, God knew that where you came
Loneliness would praise his name.

He, who made a thing of air,
Light with music, void of care,
Willed, I think, that you should borrow
Weight from other people's sorrow.

So across your daily cheer,
Gentle, intimate, and dear,
Shadows from some dim unknown
Far-off misery are thrown.

Can it be that God, who tried
All effects, could not decide
Whether uppermost should lie
Joy in life or sympathy?

No, He meant that you should claim
Your own rapture, your own aim:
All the rest we share and bless.
God made pure unselfishness.

(1)

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